2:Oberg E-5 (1946-1947)1949 SK7 Guana SK7
Terena

[Chaco Period]

THE TERENA

(Pls. 1–11)

TERENA ECONOMY IN THE CHACO

HABITAT

Although it is no longer possible to determine by direct investigation the exact nature of the economy of the Terena upon their entry into the Chaco, indirect evidence points to agriculture as being the basis of subsistence. The Terena are an Arawak-speaking people and the Arawak-speaking tribes in the Amazon Basin are predominantly agriculturists. Terena myths tell of how *Yúrikoyuvakái* taught the people to practice agriculture:

> The Indians were hungry but they had no tools and did not know how to obtain food. The twins then gave the Indians all their tools. To the men, *Yúrikoyuvakái* gave the ax, *povóoti;* the digging stick, *ilomo'i;* the knife, *piritae;* the sickle, *yopilocóti;* the war club, *puló'oi;* the bow, *shokié;* arrows, *shumé;* and the spear, *suiké.* To the women, the twins gave the spindle, *hopde. Yúrikoyuvakái* then taught the Indians how to hunt, fish, and grow crops.

We know, too, from old records, that the Arawak-speaking neighbors of the Terena were agriculturists. Thus, although no direct written or verbal evidence exists concerning the original nature of Terena economy it appears reasonably safe to assume that they were agriculturists in pre-Columbian days.

The Terena now describe their economic life in the Chaco as having been based on agriculture, hunting, fishing, collecting, and raiding. This shift away from an emphasis on agriculture is understandable. The Chaco with comparatively greater sources of wild food plants, fish, and game than existed in the tropical forest, offered not only the resources but a stimulus for their use. In addition, the practice of agriculture in the Chaco was not the same as in the rain forest. The long drought period in the Chaco demanded a storable surplus not necessary in a region where annual rainfall is more evenly distributed. Above all, the Terena came into contact with Chaco tribes that depended principally upon hunting, fishing, and collecting, and a mutual exchange of economic customs seems to have taken place. When the Terena took over the horse and the practice of hunting and raiding their neighbors on horseback, dependence

[P. 6-A]

[Post-Chaco Period]

between the Terena and their Brazilian neighbors. Economically, the impact of a foreign people was felt in many ways. The proximity of Brazilian farmers, cattlemen, railroad workers, and traders, in itself stimulated a desire for change in habits, customs, and beliefs. The guiding hand of the missionaries and the managers of the Indian Posts affected the life of the Terena more intimately and directly. The missionaries taught the people to wear modern clothes, to use modern tools, and to learn to read Portuguese. The managers of the Posts taught the Indians to build modern houses and to clear land and plant new crops. In addition, they taught them such handicrafts as blacksmithing, bricklaying, leatherwork, and the use of the sewing machine. Inevitably, close association with the Brazilians created changes in the needs of the Terena; the dietary pattern began to change, and new demands for clothing, ornaments, and amusements became integral parts of Terena economy.

The economic effect of these contacts and changes was the growing dependence of the Terena on the money economy of their Brazilian neighbors. In order to get clothes, tools, rice, maté tea, matches, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages the Indians needed money. The railroad and the cattle ranches offered a ready labor market and we find the Terena in increasing numbers going to work as cattle drivers and horse breakers on the ranches and as section hands on the railroad. The labor market also increased travel and a widening consciousness of the non-Indian world. The Indians became acquainted with the larger towns, such as Campo Grande and Porto Esperança. Some of the Terena were stimulated in their desire to learn to read, to do simple arithmetic, and to understand the ways of the strange new world. In addition to the demand for labor, the cattle ranches and the nearby towns of Taunay, Aquidauana, and Miranda offered a ready market for manioc meal, raw sugar, and hand-woven hammocks. In this way wage labor and trade became essential elements in Terena economy.

In spite of these changes subsistence agriculture, even today, forms the basis of livelihood. On their lots the Terena produce manioc, maize, beans, squashes, sugarcane, rice, bananas, oranges, mangoes, and a few additional minor crops. Man-

2:Oberg E-5 (1946-1947)1949 SK7 Guana SK7
[Post-Chaco Period] Terena

ioc is still the staple food crop, with maize and beans coming second. Rice is highly prized, but it is expensive to buy and does not grow well in this area. Manioc and raw sugar are the principal cash crops. A few head of cattle are kept, and some of the Terena drink milk. Hogs and chickens add to the flesh diet of the people. Fishing and hunting supply only a negligible amount of food.

This, in brief, is the outline of the economic history of the Terena in the last hundred years. The shifting agriculturists, hunters, and raiders of the Chaco became settled subsistence farmers upon moving into Brazil. With the coming of the railroad and the influx of settlers there has been a gradual increase in the dependence on the money economy of the Brazilians. A more exact picture of Terena economy and the relative importance of subsistence farming and dependence on commercial transactions can be obtained if we examine the economic life of a typical village.

SOURCES OF INCOME IN A TYPICAL VILLAGE

The Indian Post of Taunay[2] today has a population of 995. As this Post contains approximately one-third of the Terena population it will serve as a reasonably satisfactory sample of Terena economic life. Statistics show that families at this Post average 5 persons, which would give the Post about 200 families. Families, as a rule, have houses and lots either inside or outside the village, but all families do not cultivate farm lots outside the village. Sources-of-income study made at this Post in January 1947 revealed the following facts:

(1) About 100 men were away from the village working on ranches, on the railroad as section hands, or at various jobs in Taunay, Miranda, Aquidauana, and Campo Grande. The manager of the Post stated that 50 to 150 people are out of the Post at all times engaged in wage work. Men who work on the cattle ranches remain away from 2 weeks to 2 months, depending on the time of the year. Men who work for the railroad usually remain away for a year, often longer. If the man is married he often takes his family with him, living in quarters provided by the rail-

[2] The village is called "Bananal" by the Terena.

2:Oberg E-5 (1946-1947)1949 SK7 Guana SK7
[Post-Choco Period] Terena

men working for the Post at 14 cruzeiros per day, or a total of 21,840 cruzeiros. The income from these two sources gives a total of 411,840. This in turn would give each of the 200 families a cash income of approximately 2,059 cruzeiros per year. This is the nearest approach to family money incomes that could be made. This figure is somewhat below the estimate of between 2,000 and 3,000 cruzeiros made by the manager of the Post as it does not include the sales of manioc meal and other services performed by the Terena, but as the latter figure could not be calculated it was not considered. It is true, of course, that many families would be below and many above 2,059 cruzeiros a year. Yet from general observation there are no marked differences in the standard of living of the Terena living at the Post. The cash figure of 2,059 cruzeiros, which is equal to a little over $100 (U. S.), has little meaning unless it can be expressed in terms of goods which this money can buy.

It must be remembered that the Terena produce the staple food products themselves while living at the Post and also while working on the fazendas. These staples consist of manioc, sweetpotatoes, beans, maize, and other vegetables. Money is spent primarily for clothing and such foods and household items that cannot be produced in the village or on the fazenda. A budget for a family of five was worked out which gives the following items of expenditure:

Annual budget for family of husband, wife, and 3 children

	Cr. $
Man's clothing for year:	
1 suit—5 m. of cloth at Cr. $15 plus Cr. $15 for tailoring	90, 00
3 shirts—3 m. per shirt at Cr. $9 plus buttons	85, 00
1 pair of pants	45, 00
1 pair of shoes	120, 00
Extras (straw hats, socks, handkerchiefs, razor blades)	50, 00
Total	390, 00
Woman's clothing for year:	
3 dresses at Cr. $76	228, 00
Underclothing—6 m. at Cr. $9,00	72, 00
1 pair of sandals	15, 00
Extras (combs, face powder, etc.)	50. 00
Total	365. 00

[P. 16-B]

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175 648 184 Leverger, and Alves Ferreira. The three testimonies all date back to the decade of the forties, in the 19th century, and show us the Layâna, the Exoaladi ("Guanás"), and the Kinikinâu playing a much more decisive role in the regional economy, unlike the Terêna, who were apparently more isolated and, perhaps, on this account, more aloof. While [427] they show the Layâna living as tenant farmers /agregados/ on [439] the neighboring fazendas (118) and the "Guanás" (119) and

> 118. "The Laianas live as agregados /tenant farmers/ or camaradas /farm hands/ on the neighboring fazendas; aside from these there are some Guaicurus and Guachins." (Elliot, 1870:172.)

[433] 119. "Their (the 'Guanás') crops are not only sufficient for their own consumption, but a surplus is left to them which they sell for cash or barter...." (1870:83.)

[464] Also "many of them hire themselves out for services of all sorts in various parts of the Province, and especially for river navigation." (Ibid.) Which thus shows a participation on the "Guanás" part in the regional labor market.

the Kinikinâu (120) supplying provisions to the neo-Brazilian

Cachoeirinha

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361 A third cluster of 18 ranchos, called Capão, makes up
62 the newest part of the native reservation and consists of families
[66] who came from other aldeas, especially from Lalima. It can
[556] be said that this area stands for all that is most progressive in
Cachoeirinha, including among its occupants two of the richest
177 families on the reservation. Although our aim here is to limit
433 ourselves to a descriptive explanation of the Terêna local
166 groups, we can mention that one of the factors basic to the
621 economic development of Capão is the extremely varied and rich
experience acquired by those families in their moves from one
aldea to another, frequently by way of fazendas and neo-
000 Brazilian settlements in the region. (139) Finally, both in

[156] [829]

139. The interviews we had with these families, as well as some "life histories," permit us to conclude that these experiences were important to the birth of a "mercantile" mentality, which is practically nonexistent in Cachoeirinha. One of the most immediate results is the employment of Indians from the central nucleus on the Capão "fazendas," particularly on that of the ambitious Terêna, Lúcio Souza, a former worker on the Noroeste do Brasil railroad and former owner of a lot in the city of Miranda (he chose to return to Cachoeirinha, because his land in the city did not allow the development of his plantations).

[464] [159]

[Cachoeirinha]

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361 439 name and with which a few Capão families--whose ranchos border on the settlement--maintain trade relations.

434 439 especially Miranda, where they buy fat ("grease"), macaroni, some meat, salt, etc., as well as clothes, occasional household equipment, and brandy, which is forbidden on the reservations but is nevertheless found there. Unfortunately, we 433 128 have no data that would permit us to make an exact appraisal of the amount of the production of the aldea and its distribution through nuclear families. True, we could give estimates, but they would be of no comparative value since we could not carry 433 out the same procedure in relation to the other aldeas. It is sufficient for us to know that the production of most of the families (i.e., the production resulting from labor undertaken [439] on their own lands) falls far short of their consumption. And we can illustrate this with the fact that a considerable number of families buy outside the aldea supplies such as manioc flour, which, in fact, is the principal product of the community.

Passarinho, Moreira, and União

62 [361] [162] [164] Passarinho and Moreira aldeas occupy two contiguous areas, situated in places near Miranda and have a total population of 239 persons. Like Cachoeirinha, these aldeas for some time have had an influx of families from other aldeas and fazendas, while they themselves have supplied Cachoeirinha [162] with some individuals. In 1927, the population of Passarinho was estimated at 110 persons and that of /78/ Moreira at 98. [361] At that time, Passarinho--the closer one--was two kilometers from Miranda; now, it can be said that both are no more than suburbs of the city, so bound to it are the lives of their members

[Francisco Horta]

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433 But if we were to compare the Terêna and the Kaiwá
511 populations in Francisco Horta, the latter would leave much
241 to be desired in terms of economic development. Actually
439 the difference is quite real; the Terêna families exhibit an
Gi adequate standard of living, based on good farm plots and
[464] regular trade with Dourados, aside from well-built houses similar to the neo-Brazilian dwellings in the region; whereas the Kaiwá look quite poor, tattered and with an agricultural production that is hardly enough for their own consumption, compelling them to hire themselves out for the maté industry or any other work on the fazendas of the region.

G To close this chapter, in which we endeavored to analyze
621 from an ecological standpoint the present configuration and
433 distribution of the Terêna local groups, we can say that all
648 the communities studied are characterized by being turned
464 toward the outside: not only through the fact that the Terêna
177 try to place all of their production on the regional market (leaving a small part for their own consumption), but also, and principally, through their being hired by the fazendas, where they find their principal source of income. We have seen in this brief analysis how rare are the /98/ cases of self-sufficient Terêna families, understanding by this the fact that they are not obliged to work outside their own lands for their survival. Nearly all of the useful population (from 20 to 50 years of age) is connected with the regional labor market, al-
[171] though as a mobile group. This permits us to state that here is a phenomenon of economic integration of the highest degree, when we compare the Terêna with other tribal groups that are also "integrated into Brazilian society," (156) but not necessarily assimilated by it.

121 156. We use the concept of "integrated" to characterize the end situation of a continuum at the opposite extreme of which are the "isolated"

[Text continues on p. 142]

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unperceived by the communities that were not fortunate enough to get a post which, for better or for worse, would supervise life in the reservation. Although this is not in accordance with the administrative norms of the S. P. I., it has not been possible to avoid this distortion to which a large part of the superintendents are subject. The most obvious case is that of União aldea, which, because it is not a reservation but a private spot acquired by the Indians themselves--, does not receive the slightest amount of help; and even, it can be said, is regarded quite unfavorably by the great majority of S. P. I. officials.

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In aldeas where the S. P. I. is located, the impression is conveyed of very slight concern with the communal economy, i.e., that of the Indians themselves, which is neglected in favor--of what we shall call--the post economy. We shall not here go into the merits of this "policy," since we do not /102/ know to what extent it reflects the directives furnished by the central administration, in Rio de Janeiro, or the regional one, the inspetoria, in Campo Grande. The truth is that there is very great concern over the production of the post, i.e., that resulting from labor financed by the S. P. I, whether it relates to farm plots, to cattle-raising, or to the extraction of wood or angico bark. This labor is ordinarily carried out by the

648 /102 cont./ This labor is ordinarily carried out by the
621 Indians themselves, who are paid especially for this, but this
433 does not exclude the hiring of a "Pururuya," nearly always in
[464] the capacity of a post employee. The superintendents explain
[465] that this production reverts to the benefit of the post and the aldea, while part of it is also laid aside for those families whose heads, for reasons of illness, are unable to support them. (160)

160. This expressed a wish on the part of the officials rather than reality. In the first place, because production, with rare exceptions, was relatively insignificant, often almost nonexistent; in the second place, because the income resulting from production was not always put to use in the aldea or post itself, but channeled to Rio de Janeiro, where it was deposited as native revenue, to be applied to Indian assistance generally, at the discretion of the S. P. I. Diretoria. For these reasons, the Indian never participated in this work with enthusiasm, since he only rarely benefited from the revenue obtained by the post.

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184 There are posts, for example, which are characterized
621 by possessing good herds of cattle, such as Lalima, Buriti,
433 and Brejão, whereas others have an agriculturally oriented economy, with their plots of rice, cane, and manioc, and recent experiments with small coffee plantations. Cachoeirinha can be taken as the most representative of this latter type.

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433 can be taken as the most representative of this latter type.
648 As for the extraction of angico on reservation lands, or of timber itself, for commercial purposes, this varies according to the central administration, in Rio de Janeiro, which now permits it, now forbids it, pleading, in the second case, the [434] protection of the native patrimony. The fact is that this extractive activity is not a regular source of income for the post or for the Indians.

184 In regard to the economy of the native community proper,
621 the differences relating to the systems of production are not
433 so great as to lead to the establishing of different types of communities. It can even be said that the cattle of Buriti, for example, or the rice fields of Cachoeirinha, influenced the character of native production in the respective communities very little or hardly at all. Few are the families /103/ that benefit from the post production, whether through receiving seeds in considerable quantities, or through having access to a good breed of cattle to improve their herds. The great majority of the population are left aside from the post's economic [241] program. And what characterizes the families is that they [464] work on plots of their own (sweet and bitter manioc, beans [511] (feijão miudo), and sometimes rice) which are not even sufficient for the family subsistence, achieved only with the
184 men's employment on the regional labor market. As we could
511 see in Chapter V from the study of individual communities,
434 the great majority of Terêna families, regardless of the aldeas
464 to which they belong, satisfy their most basic needs by [463] combining the produce of their fields with money earned out- [314] side the reservation, whether tending the cattle or pack oxen of the fazendeiros of the region, or in agricultural work, for which the demand is constantly increasing--as coffee cultivation is taken up by the neighboring middling and small farmers--, or in the extractive industry, where the Terêna are experts in the difficult art of extracting angico bark without damaging it.

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184 damaging it. (161) Aside from these activities, there are those
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161. We exclude the extraction of maté, since Terêna Indians do not work at it. Witness Francisco Horta, in Dourados, a maté area, where the Terêna community stands aloof from that industry, whereas the Kaiwá find it their chief productive activity.

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related to the cities, which are undertaken by a considerable number of Indians from aldeas such as Passarinho, Moreira, Limão Verde, and, to a lesser extent, Cachoeirinha, Ipegue, and Bananal, /all of which/ are close to Miranda and Aquidauana.

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433 This situation--of the homogeneity of the Terêna economy, seen in general terms--does not preclude, however, the existence of some native families that are practically "self-sufficient," i.e., families that, operating as efficient production units, forego the possibilities of work coming from the outside. The average number of such families, per aldea, is not more than two. In such cases, the nature of the post production is important, not so much because it is responsible for the type of production developed by these families, but simply because the two economies coincide since they both undergo the same ecological conditioning. Thus, in Lalima and Brejão, reservations with excellent pasture ground, we have Terêna families with herds sufficiently large to permit a relative economic /104/ independence. (162) In Bananal and

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162. Buriti, in spite of its pastoral character, does not

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162 In the municipio of Miranda there exist several tribes of
103 Indians, the largest of them being that of the Terena Indians, who occupy sundry aldeas, which are: Agachy, Cachoeira, Cachoeirinha, Bocaina, Ipeque, Morinha, and Santa Ana.

433 The Terena are agriculturalists and are especially engaged
28 in the making of manioc flour; in general they are very in-
323 dustrious, they weave cotton, making nets and other fabrics;
439 from the palm they braid hats, large baskets, sifters, and mats;
[241] from the pita /agave/ and other fibrous plants, the cordage for
[824] weaving bags, in which they transport their products to market; from clay they make platters, dishes, ollas, and many other vessels for domestic use. They exchange their products for beverages and fancy articles. To take their products to market they go in large groups, directed by the cacique.

142 With regard to their stature there are tall, average, and short ones. There are very few tall ones, but they are all
[165] strong and muscular. The men are very ugly for the most part, the women passable, and they attain a very advanced age.
162 The proportion of the two sexes is one-third for the male and two-thirds for the female.

291 Most of them go about completely naked and the most
177 civilized cover themselves with clothing given them by strangers.

847 Birth. They customarily kill the first child, if [redacted] a
648 male, /89/ so that the Christians may not take it as a slave;
562 women are very much valued among them. They accompany
844 the birth of a baby with great fiestas, which always end in
[327] drunkenness.

To give birth the woman goes to the woods, where she makes an excavation about 45 centimeters long by 35 centi-
[847] meters wide, which is lined with palm leaves. In this excava-
[846] tion they give birth, and if the baby is a male they kill it at
[262] once, using the excavation itself as a grave, after which they go to the river to bathe and then submit to a rigorous diet, eating only the heart of the palm called palmita.